

Message Text

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FOR IBS VOA COVERAGE DESK ATTENTION AFRICAN DIVISION PASS IPS
AFRICA BRANCH

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YAOUNDE-- THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS OF THE DIFFERENT TRIBAL AND CULTURAL GROUPS WITHIN THE COUNTRY OF CAMEROON HAVE SUFFICIENT UNITY OF STYLE AND SPIRIT, ACCORDING TO ONE VISITING SPECIALIST, TO LEND SUPPORT TO THE NATIONS DETERMINATION TO WELD ITSELF INTO A UNIFIED WHOLE.

FOR THIS REASON, A GROUP OF CAMEROONIAN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL LEADERS WERE TOLD THURSDAY, "THE STUDY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE ART STYLES OF THE MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLES OF THE CAMEROON CAN BE A TREMENDOUS FORCE FOR THAT UNITY BASED UPON A SENSE OF A COMMON HERITAGE WHICH IS SO ESSENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE STRENGTH AND PROSPERITY OF THE CAMEROON NATION."

WARREN ROBBINS, DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, IN AN ILLUSTRATED TALK AT THE RESIDENCE OF U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CAMEROON C. ROBERT MOORE, STRESSED ALSO THAT IN RECENT YEARS, THE WORLD-WIDE RECOGNITION OF THE "DYNAMISM AND EVOCATIVE POWER OF AFRICAN SCULPTURE" HAS CONSTITUTED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN THE WALLS OF ETHNOCENTRISM WHICH HAVE PREVIOUSLY IMPEDED MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CULTURES OF THE WORLD. THE CHANGE IN APPROACH, HE SAID, HAS NOT ONLY GIVEN THE WESTERN WORLD THE "CULTURAL TOOLS" WITH WHICH TO UNDERSTAND THE ARTISTIC MANIFESTATIONS OF AFRICAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE BUT HAS EQUALLY GIVEN AFRICANS THE CAPABILITY OF LOOKING AT THEIR OWN SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE.

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MRE. ROBBINS IS IN YAOUNDE AS PART OF THE DELEGATION OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN OBTAINING AND RETURNING TO THE CAMEROONIAN GOVERNMENT THE FAMOUS "AFO-A-KOM" STATUE. THIS CARVING, A SACRED OBJECT TO THE KOM PEOPLE OF WESTERN CAMEROON, DISAPPEARED FROM ITS SHRINE IN THE VILLAGE OF LAIKOM SEVEN YEARS AGO. SINCE ITS RECENT DISCOVERY IN A NEW YORK ART GALLERY, A BROAD-SCALE EFFORT TO BUY IT BACK TO ENSURE ITS RETURN TO ITS HOMELAND WAS MOUNTE IN AMERICA, CULMINATING IN ITS RECENT RETURN. WITH MR. ROBBINS ON THIS VISIT IS LAWRENCE GUSSMAN, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ALBERT SCHWEITZER HOSPITAL, AND A MAJOR SUPPORTER OF THE MONEY-RAISING EFFORT., GEORGE SPICELY, PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART., AND WILLIAM ELLIS OF THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY. ITEM.
BACHE

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